

Cross-linguistic influence (CLI) in mirrored properties

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Aims of the study

This study investigates the potential effect of crosslinguistic influence (CLI) in mirrored properties of the two languages, Italian and Norwegian, of bilingual children. The property under investigation is the possessive structure, more precisely the two alternates: the prenominal and postnominal possessive.

CLI is more prone to occur (i) at the interface between two modules of the grammar (i.e., syntax and pragmatics), and (ii) surface structure overlap between the two languages¹

Mirrored properties	Italian		Norwegian	
	Pre-nominal	Post-nominal	Pre-nominal	Post-nominal
Example	<i>La mia macchina</i> The my car	<i>La macchina mia</i> The car my	<i>Min bil</i> My car	<i>Bilen min</i> Car-the my
Markedness (contextual)	Unmarked	Marked	Marked	Unmarked
Frequency	More (86%)	Less	Less	More (73%)
Bilingual acquisition	preferred		preferred	

NB: the reported bilingual acquisition was in combination with languages that only had the prenominal possessive (Swedish² and English³). Thus the structural overlap influenced the overproduction.

RQ: how CLI occurs in properties which are mirrored across the two languages of a bilingual child?

Possible factors

Cross-linguistic overcorrection⁴

Dominance^{2,5}

Simplification of the heritage language⁶

Participants

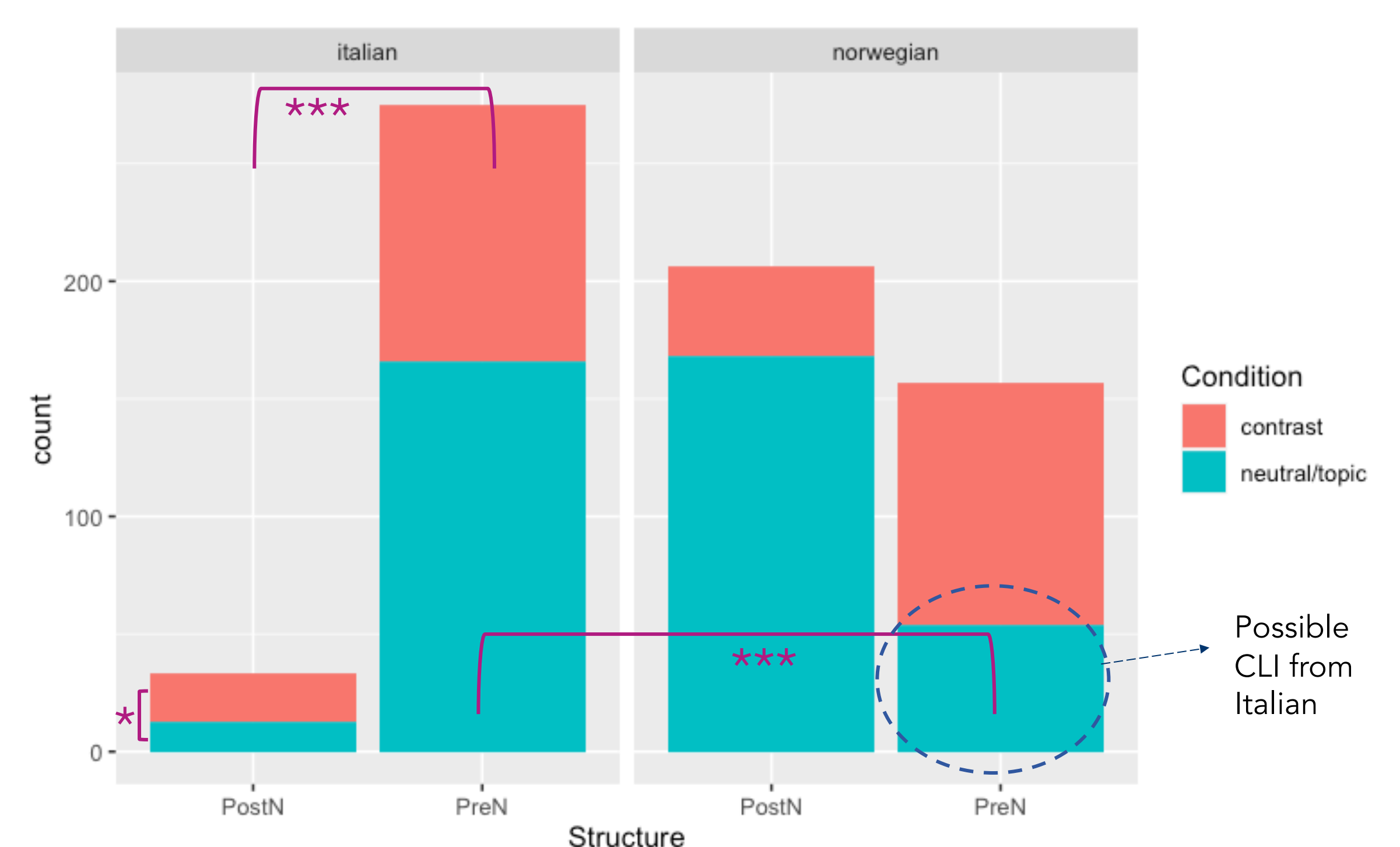
31 Norwegian-Italian bilingual children (15 female) aged 4-10 (mean=6;3), 28 residing in Norway
27 bilingual controls: 12 Italian English (ages 4;0-7;5), and 15 Norwegian-English (ages 4;4-9;8).

The task

Elicitation task designed in ppt administered via screen sharing on Zoom. The children saw characters (1st, 2nd, and 3rd) person interacting with objects. Neutral and contrast conditions were elicited.

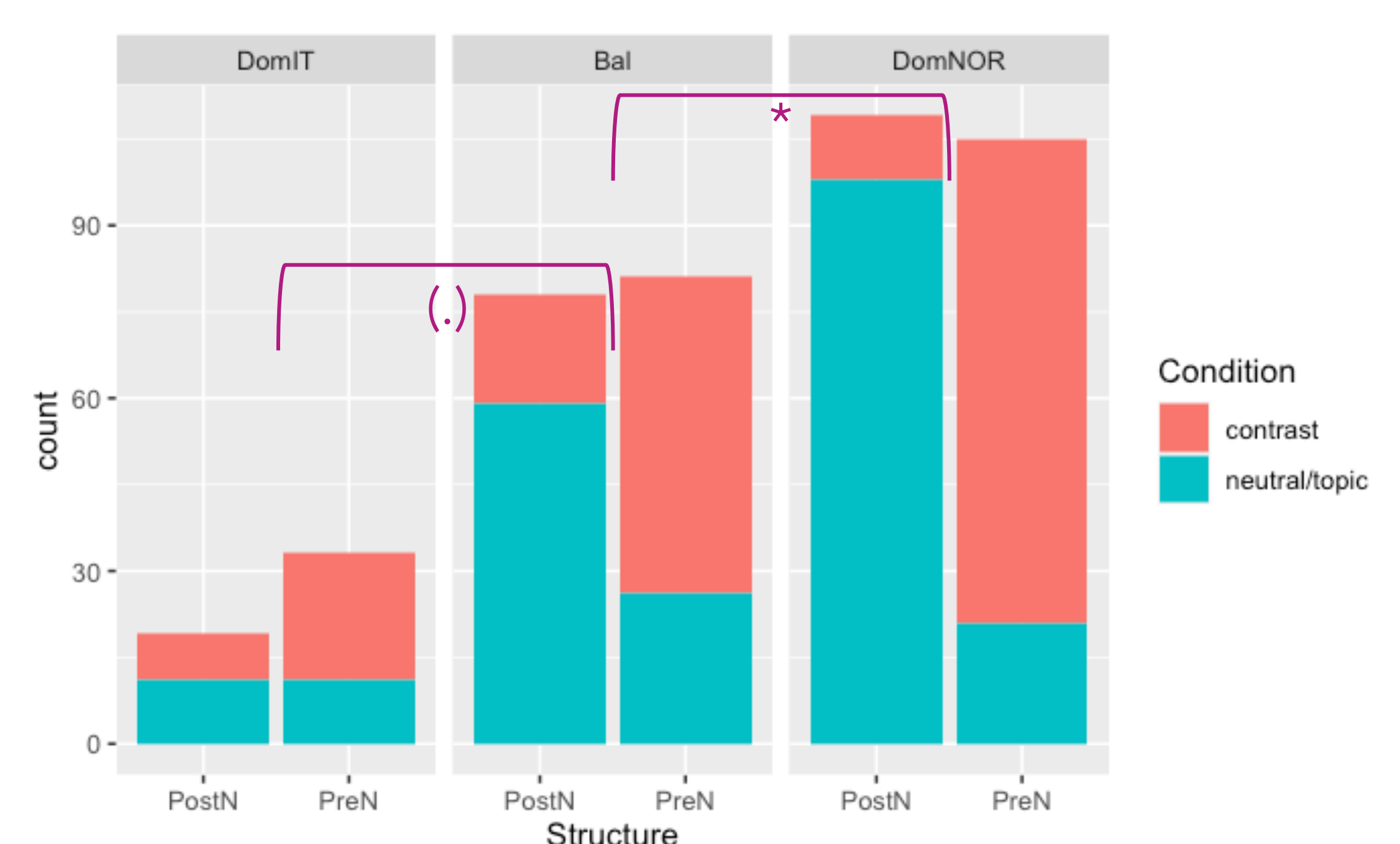


Results: glm in R. The structure (dependent variable) was coded as 0 and 1 based on markedness. Condition (neutral/contrast) and language were set as independent variables.



Dominance (in Norwegian)

Calculated based on the CLT^{7,8} pre test. Not significant for the Italian data.



Conclusions

The Italian system (HL) has been simplified, but it still excerpts CLI on Norwegian. CLI cannot be attested in the simplified property. Dominance may influence accuracy, but only if that property has not been simplified

Selected references: ¹Hulk, A., & Müller, N. (2001). Bilingual first language acquisition at the interface between syntax and pragmatics. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 3(3), 227-244. ²Bernardini, P. (2003). Child and adult acquisition of word order in the Italian DP. In N. Müller (Ed.), *(In)vulnerable Domains in Multilingualism* (pp. 41-81). John Benjamins Publishing Company. ³Westergaard, M., & Anderssen, M. (2015). Word order variation in Norwegian possessive constructions: Bilingual acquisition and attrition. In J. Bondi Johanesen & J. C. Salmons (Eds.), *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition attrition and change* (pp. 21-45). John Benjamins Publishing Company. ⁴Kupisch, T. (2014). Adjective placement in simultaneous bilinguals (German-Italian) and the concept of cross-linguistic overcorrection. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 17(1), 222-233. ⁵Döpke, S. (1998). Competing language structures: the acquisition of verb placement by bilingual German-English children. *Journal of Child Language*, 25(3), 555-584. ⁶Montrul, S. (2010). Current issues in heritage language acquisition. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30, 3-23. ⁷Roch, M., Levorato, C., & Tedeschi, R. (2015). *Cross-linguistic Lexical Tasks: Italian version (CLT-IT)*. Università di Padova. ⁸Simonsen, H., Hansen, P., & Luniewska, M. (2012). *Cross-linguistic Lexical Tasks: Norwegian version (CLT-NO)*. UiO.



Check out the full study (draft)